

# KISKA, LITTLE KISKA, AND SEMISOPCHNOI ISLANDS

## FIELD INVESTIGATION



U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska

Newsletter No. 1, November 1995

### Introduction to the Project

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District (the Corps) is investigating waste sites on Kiska/Little Kiska and Semisopchnoi Islands, of the Rat Islands group in the Aleutian Chain, which are a result of past military activities on the islands. This project is being accomplished under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS) program. The Corps has retained Dames & Moore, an environmental and engineering firm, for the investigation. The Corps and Dames & Moore are working with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to make sure work on the project meets all state regulations.

### Military History

Kiska and Little Kiska Islands were occupied by both the Japanese and the U.S. Military during World War II and were heavily bombed. Semisopchnoi Island was used as a weather station and aircraft warning station during World War II. The military sites were abandoned at the end of the war. Since 1980, the islands have been managed and maintained as part of the Aleutians Unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. In 1985, portions of Kiska Island were designated as the Japanese Occupation Site, Kiska Island National Historical Landmark.

### What is DERP-FUDS?

Kiska, Little Kiska, and Semisopchnoi Islands are included on a master inventory of approximately 600 potentially contaminated, formerly-used, defense sites which are eligible for further action under the DERP-FUDS program. The three goals of DERP are: (1) to identify and cleanup contamination from hazardous substances and pollutants; (2) to correct environmental

damage, and (3) to remove unsafe buildings and structures. Because these are program goals rather than requirements, the Department of Defense (DoD) can prioritize and carry out activities to meet the three goals.

The Corps is DoD's agent for the FUDS sites. The Corps has been given responsibility for cleaning up the waste sites on these islands. The US Army Engineer Division, Huntsville Mandatory Center of Expertise retains responsibility for the removal of any possible explosives on these islands.

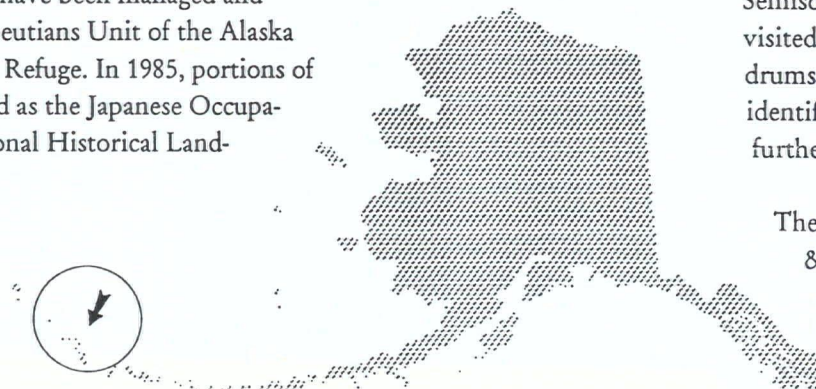
### What's been done so far?

**Kiska/Little Kiska:** These sites were visited by the Corps in 1977 to inventory structures and in 1991 to perform a preliminary investigation of potential hazardous, toxic, and radioactive wastes. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) also visited the sites in 1987 and 1988. During these visits, Corps and USFWS personnel identified 30 potential chemicals of concern from oil and gas containers, underground pipelines, and power generating facilities.

**Semisopchnoi:** This site was visited by USFWS in 1988. Several drums and camp remains were identified and recommended for further investigation.

The Corps contractor, Dames & Moore, conducted a field investigation at both sites in September-October 1995. Dames & Moore spent three

weeks on the islands performing field screening of soil samples, visual assessments, biological reconnaissance, ordnance/explosive waste documentation, and an archeological/historical assessment. Access to the islands was provided by air and sea transport. Field personnel were based offshore of the islands on a research vessel equipped with a laboratory and living facilities.



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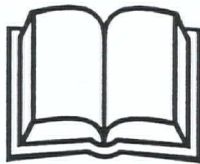
## What happens next?

Dames & Moore is currently compiling and analyzing data from the 1995 field investigation. This data will be compiled into a report to be drafted this winter. Based on the results of these analyses, recommendations will be developed for the next field season.

The information developed during the 1995 field investigation will be used to identify sites which need further investigation, and sites which don't need any further action. A more detailed investigation will be conducted at those sites which need further investigation. Information from the detailed investigation will be used to recommend remedial alternatives for any sites which may pose a significant risk to human health or the environment.

## For your review...

The Corps is establishing an information repository (library) of documents for this project. The repository will be located at the Corps headquarters on Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. For more information on accessing this repository, please contact Suzanne Beauchamp, US Army Corps of Engineers, at 907-753-5656. Another repository may be established at a second location if a particular community shows a high level of interest in this project. Or, the second repository could be located at the Loussac Library in Anchorage or another convenient location. Your suggestions for the location of the second repository will be greatly appreciated.



## We'd like to hear from you

The Corps advertised this study in several newspapers around the state and will be sending out newsletters to everyone who responded and indicated that they were interested. These newsletters will keep you informed of project events, notify you when documents are available for review, allow you to evaluate alternatives being considered, and give you an opportunity to comment on these alternatives.

This project relies on knowledge about past activities at the sites, and information on locations of potential hazards. Any information you can provide is welcome and may affect the course of the investigation. Should you have any information you feel may be helpful, please pass it along to us.

We would like your input on this project. If you have any comments or concerns, please send them to the address listed below, or contact one of the following:

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